

HUMBERSIDE FIRE AUTHORITY

FRIDAY, 3 DECEMBER 2021

PRESENT:

Members

Representing East Riding of Yorkshire Council:

Councillors Chadwick, Dennis, Green, Healing, Jefferson and Smith

Representing Hull City Council:

Councillors Belcher, Chambers, Dad, North, Randall and Singh

Representing North East Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Lindley, Patrick and Shepherd

Representing North Lincolnshire Council:

Councillors Briggs (*Chairperson*), Grant, Sherwood and Waltham MBE

Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside

Jonathan Evison - Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside Police

Officers of Humberside Fire & Rescue Service

Chris Blacksell - Chief Fire Officer & Chief Executive, Phil Shillito - Deputy Chief Fire Officer/Executive Director Service Delivery, Niall McKiniry - Assistant Chief Fire Officer, Kevin Wilson - Executive Director of Corporate Services/Section 151 Officer, Jason Kirby - Temporary Director of People and Development, Simon Rhodes - Temporary director of Service Improvement, Mathew Buckley - Monitoring Officer/Secretary and Gareth Naidoo - Committee Manager

Also in attendance:

Independent Co-opted Members of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny Committee

Mandy Thomlinson (presented Minute 154) and Andrew Smith were in attendance as observers.

The meeting was held at The Village Hotel, Hessle.

147/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - Apologies for absence were submitted from Councillors Davison, Fox and Swinburn.

148/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST - Councillor Patrick declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute 158/21 insofar as he is a Member of Unite the Union.

149/21 MINUTES - Resolved - That the minutes of the meeting of the Authority held on 22 October 2021 be received as a correct record.

150/21 QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS - None.

151/21 PETITIONS AND DEPUTATIONS - None received.

152/21 COMMUNICATIONS - The following communications were reported:

- (i) Councillor Healing paid tribute to professional and swift response of the Service in responding to a recent fire incident in Withernsea where two fire engines were deployed from Patrington and Withernsea.
- (ii) Recruitment and diversity - a letter from the Fire Minister had been circulated to Members regarding Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. The Service's recruitment drive would go live on 6 December and the recently approved Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy had been published in an easy read version and would be circulated to Members in due course.
- (iii) Immediate detriment on pensions - the previous guidance issued by the Home Office had now been withdrawn by the Home Office. At this stage the Authority would continue to adopt the framework.

153/21 APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 8 NOVEMBER 2021 - Resolved - That the minutes of the Appointments Committee, held on 8 November 2021, be approved and Christine Cooper be appointed to the post of Executive Director of Human Resources and Training.

154/21 GOVERNANCE, AUDIT AND SCRUTINY (GAS) COMMITTEE MINUTES OF 15 NOVEMBER 2021 - Mandy Thomlinson, presented the draft minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 15 November 2021.

As per Minute 97/21, it was proposed that resolution (c), "that regular update reports detailing the Service's progress in implementing the Code, and the effectiveness of the Code, be submitted to the Fire Authority every six months" be adopted by the Fire Authority.

Resolved - That the minutes of the Governance, Audit and Scrutiny (GAS) Committee held on 15 November 2021 be received, and resolution (c) of Minute 97/21, "that regular update reports detailing the Service's progress in implementing the Code, and the effectiveness of the Code, be submitted to the Fire Authority every six months" be adopted by the Fire Authority.

155/21 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR UPDATE REPORT 2021/22 - The Executive Director of Corporate Services/S.151 Officer submitted a report that provided an update on the Authority's treasury management activities for the first half of the financial year 2021/22.

The Authority on 12 March 2021 approved the annual 2021/22 Treasury Management Policy Statement and agreed a range of Prudential Indicators aimed at ensuring effective treasury management and affordability of capital plans.

This report ensured compliance with recommended practice as outlined in the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIFPA) Code of Practice 2009, by providing Members with an update on treasury management undertaken since the beginning of the financial year and highlighting key Prudential Indicator information.

The Authority's temporary investments totalled £15.5m as at 30 September 2021. The Authority had not taken any short-term borrowing in the first six months of the year and was unlikely to undertake short-term borrowing in the second half of the financial year.

Long-term loans were taken out either to replace existing loans which had matured or to fund capital expenditure. Under the Prudential Regime there are no longer centrally imposed limits on borrowing, but individual Authorities are required to determine themselves what is a sustainable and affordable level of borrowing as an integral part of their Medium-Term Financial Planning processes. The Authority's level of borrowing was £16.9m as at 30 September 2021, with an equated average rate of interest payable at 3.49 per cent. An expected £661k of interest was projected to be payable on external debt for 2021/22.

Appendix 1 of the report detailed the Prudential Indicators agreed by Members at the meeting of the Authority on 12 March 2021 and showed for comparison the actual figures as at 30 September 2021.

The S.151 Officer considered the current capital programme to be affordable and sustainable with the revenue effects of capital investment built into the Medium-Term Financial Plan. External debt was currently £13.3m below the agreed authorised limit for 2021/22 and the maturity structure for both borrowing

and investments remained within the approved upper and lower limits. Subsequent borrowing or re-scheduling would take into account prevailing interest rates on offer from the Public Works Loans Board, the current maturity structure of loans, balanced with the need to reduce capital risk by maintaining prudently low levels of cash-balances.

Resolved - That the report be received.

156/21 MEDIUM-TERM RESOURCE STRATEGY 2022/23 - 2025/26 UPDATE - The Executive Director of Corporate Services/S.151 Officer provided an update on the draft Medium-Term Resource Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26.

The Medium-Term Resource Strategy (MTRS) covers a period of four years but would be reviewed annually to reflect the dynamic nature of both the fire service and changes in funding. It described the financial direction of the organisation and outlines financial pressures as well as providing options for delivering a sustainable budget and capital programme over the medium term. It also set out how the Authority could provide the resources to deliver the priorities in the Integrated Risk Management Plan (IRMP) within the challenging financial climate.

The MTRS as presented included an increase in the precept of £1.76 (1.99%) for a Band D property for 2022/23. A prudent planning assumption had been made regarding the future years 2023/24 to 2025/26 of a 1.99% increase. Final decisions on the actual precept would be made each year by the Authority based on the financial circumstances at the time.

The Authority's budget for 2021/22 was £45.089m and the quarter two revenue monitoring report showed a projected budget underspend of £0.298m as at 30 September 2021.

The expected General Reserve at 1 April 2022 would be maintained at £5.9m to match identified level following the risk assessment used to produce the Prudent General Minimum Level of Reserves. The Authority retained £7.685m Earmarked reserves. Overall the forecast closing position on reserves for 2021/22 was £13.530m.

Members requested that the Service continue to lobby government in receiving additional funding. Members were assured that letters were regularly sent to local MPs requesting an increase in budget and the Service would continue to lobby government through the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC).

Resolved - That the report be received.

157/21 CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2022/23 ONWARDS - VEHICLES, ESTATES AND ICT - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer submitted a report that set out for approval the proposed capital programme for Vehicles, Estates and ICT for 2022/23 onwards.

In the last 12 months, the Service took delivery of one appliance and had recently placed an order for a further five, in keeping with the vehicle replacement programme. Next year there would be no appliances ordered and accordingly would utilise the time to investigate new technologies, as well as work regionally to explore joint procurement opportunities through collaboration.

The first electric vehicle infrastructure was due to be installed at Cromwell Road Station and the Service's first ever electric vehicles (EVs) would then be introduced into the Fleet; the Service's Preventions teams being the first to take receipt. Further investment into the infrastructure required to support an EV fleet would continue over the lifetime of this programme (four years). All (suitable) future replacement vehicles within the current fleet would be replaced with EVs wherever possible/feasible, in keeping with the Service's Environmental Strategy. Consideration would be given to the replacement of other vehicles with EVs, including appliances in due course, as and when new technologies/costs allowed. The budget requirement associated with light cars/vans had been increased to reflect the move to EVs.

As previously reported, Covid-19 restrictions had resulted in significant slippage across the estates capital programme during 2020, and the subsequent introduction of Covid-19 safe working arrangements had also had an impact in terms of timescales on site, and in some instances lead-in times for materials and equipment.

The core ICT Replacement programme had been brought together with the agile/flexible working programme to ensure that replacement equipment was agile ready. This meant that maximum use and value could be obtained from all ICT equipment. It was noted that the move to hosted systems meant that great pressure was placed on the revenue budget, releasing pressure moving forward on the capital budget.

The Emergency Services Network (ESN) was replacement for the Airwave radio scheme currently in use for operational communications. As a result, an additional capital funding requirement of £400k over the lifetime of this programme (four years) was necessary to mitigate this risk.

Data Centre and core network equipment would need upgrading as part of the maintenance/replacement programme which was critical to meet the cyber-security threats faced by the Service.

Discussion took place over the recent agreement made at the COP26 Climate Conference of the phasing out of petrol and diesel vehicles by 2040, although specialist lorries, such as military or emergency services vehicles, would be exempt. The Service would continue to consider alternative greener options as and when they became feasible whilst ensuring it achieved the maximum lifespan of its current fleet vehicles (approximately 12-15 years).

Resolved - That the Capital Programme for Vehicles, Estates and ICT for 2022/23 onwards be approved and incorporated into the Medium-Term Financial Plan 2022/23 to 2025/26 for consideration at the meeting of the Fire Authority on 11 February 2022.

158/21 STAFF PAY AWARDS - ANNUAL UPDATE - The Temporary Director of People and Development submitted an update report outlining the pay position of all the staff groups employed, including current arrangements and awards made over previous years for comparison.

Grey Book staff were those uniformed members of staff in the roles of Fire-fighter to Area Manager. They were represented at their national employer NJC by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) and Fire Officers Association (FOA). The Grey book staff had accepted a pay increment of 1.5 per cent for 2021/22 from the National Employers (NJC) Grey Book.

Green Book members of staff were all those members of staff who were non-operational. They were represented at their national employer NJC by UNISON, GMB and UNITE. The Green book staff representative bodies had declined a final offer of 1.75 per cent, registered a pay dispute with the NJC and were currently undertaking ballots for strike action with their members.

Gold Book members of staff were those members of staff in the most senior management positions occupying the roles of Brigade Manager or similar. They were represented at their national employer NJC by the Fire Leaders Association (FLA). The Gold book staff had accepted a pay increment of 1.5 per cent for 2021/22 from the National Employers (NJC) Gold Book.

Members would separately receive the annual Pay Policy Statement 2020/21 for approval at the Authority meeting of 11 March 2022. The pay policy statement was also published on the Authority's website.

Resolved - That the report be received.

159/21 STRATEGIC PLAN AND INTEGRATED RISK MANAGEMENT PLAN (IRMP) 2021-24 REFRESH - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer submitted a report that informed Members of relevant changes made during the first year of the 2021-24 plans and any potentially significant factors that might impact future delivery of the plans.

Having reviewed its Strategic Objectives and underpinning Objective Statements, the Service was confident that they remained valid. The objectives described what was wished to be achieved over the life of plan, providing focus for planning and delivery of services that were actionable, achievable, had clear accountability and were measurable. There were no changes to the Strategic Plan at this stage.

The IRMP was a living document that was regularly reviewed and updated to reflect relevant changes to risk profiles and approaches to mitigate those risks. Information was fed into this process via interactions within the community, partner agencies, horizon scanning and local and national risk registers.

The following amendments, of note, had been made during 2021:

- The Equality Impact Assessment had been reviewed in line with wider work to make the website more accessible, including general accessibility formatting and translation and sight impaired accessibility software. Changes had been reviewed and endorsed by relevant community groups.
- Alignment to changes arising from the Prevention and Protection review and implementation plan.
- Inclusion of 'you said, we did' microphone icons within the document explaining changes arising from the public consultation exercise conducted when developing the plan in 2020.
- Reference to our Public Sector Equality Duty Priorities.
- Reference to relevant National Fire Standards and the CRP workstream.

A formal consultation for the development of the IRMP 2021-24 was conducted in November 2020, primarily using social media and on-line approaches. During the consultation communities and staff were asked to respond to a number of specific questions, including a question relating to the impact of climate change on risk and resourcing requirements. Subsequently, amongst a number of other environmental initiatives, a draft Environmental Sustainability Plan (see Appendix A) had been developed, focussing on six themed areas, including:

- Sustainable Procurement
- Estate Management
- Biodiversity and Wildlife
- Fleet Management
- Operational Activities (linking directly to the IRMP)
- Behavioural Change

As the draft plan had direct links to future Community Risk Plan (CRP)/IRMP risk and opportunity planning assumptions, it was appropriate to consult on the content of the plan with communities and staff.

It was noted that the still to be published Annual State of Fire report and forthcoming Fire Reform White Paper were likely to impact on the Strategic Plan and IRMP and therefore the Service would need to reflect upon these once published and amend its plans as appropriate.

Members challenged the Service to stretch its offset target of 2036 to an earlier date if possible.

Members took assurance from the process used to review and update the IRMP.

Resolved - That a four-week period of consultation and engagement for an aligned Environmental Sustainability Plan be approved.

160/21 EMERGENCY SERVICES ENVIRONMENT AND SUSTAINABILITY GROUP CHARTER - The Assistant Chief Fire Officer submitted a verbal report on emergency services environment and sustainability group charter.

A national group of Fire and Rescue Service, Ambulance Service, Police Force and HM Coast Guard was coordinating and sharing best practice on environment and suitability improvements. A Charter had been devised that would assist emergency services in their sustainability journey and help keep them abreast of the latest global sustainability agenda.

Emergency services were being asked to adopt three key principals:

- People
- Use of the public purse
- Key focus on the planet

The Charter was signed by senior leaders and on behalf of the Service, the Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive and the Chairperson of the Authority would be signing the Charter in due course.

Resolved - That the update be noted.

161/21 HMICFRS UPDATE - The Temporary Director of Service Improvement provided the Authority with a verbal update in relation to Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Service's (HMICFRS).

The reports from the first tranche of Inspections were due to be published alongside Sir Tom Windsor's Annual State of Fire report on 15 December 2021.

The Service's HM Inspection timetable had now been agreed and would commence on Monday 13 December 2021.

Resolved - That the update be noted.

162/21 COVID-19 UPDATE - The Chief Fire Officer/Chief Executive submitted a verbal report that updated Members on the Service's response to the Pandemic

- The Covid-19 infection rates had reduced slightly across the Humber region, although organisations were keeping a watching brief on the potential impact of the new omicron variant.
- In line with Government advice, the Service had re-adopted mask wearing whilst moving round Service buildings and when travelling in Service vehicles.
- The LRF Recovery Group was meeting weekly, although increased requests had started to be received from the health service.
- As a gesture of thanks to all staff for their hard work throughout the pandemic, a commemorative badge had been issued to all staff.

Resolved - That the update be noted.